

**SEATTLE PLANNING COMMISSION  
MINUTES  
JANUARY 9, 2003  
Approved January 23, 2003**

**Commissioners in Attendance:** Denise Lathrop, Vice Chair, Anjali Bhagat Angela Brooks, Gregory Davis, Matthew Kitchen, Jeanne Krikawa, Lyn Krizanich, Steve Sheehy, Mimi Sheridan, Darryl Smith, Paul Tomita

**Commissioners Absent:** George Blomberg, Grace Chien, John Owen

**Staff:** Marty Curry, Executive Director; Kelly Walker, Staff

**Visitors:** None in attendance

**Call to Order**

Vice-Chair Denise Lathrop called the meeting to order at 3:10 p.m., noting that Chair John Owen was unable to attend today's meeting.

**Approval of Minutes**

Minutes from the November 14, 2002 Full Commission meeting were approved unanimously as written.

**Chair's Report**

Vice Chair Denise Lathrop reported on several issues and upcoming events. These include Monorail/SPMA community workshops from January 21 – 30 and the Commission's Transportation Committee meeting on January 23<sup>rd</sup>.

**Commission Administration Updates**

Marty Curry reported that the hiring process for the Commission's Planning Analyst position is almost complete. Interviews have been concluded and reference checks are being made on several finalists. Marty thanked Jeanne Krikawa for her help in the selection process. She and Vice Chair Lathrop also thanked Kelly Walker for her help over the past four months, filling the position on a temporary basis.

Marty noted that DCLU finally has a new director! Commissioners voiced their enthusiastic support of the Mayor's choice of Diane Sugimura and expressed interest in meeting with her soon.

Finally, Marty Curry reported that the Mayor will be filling two vacancies (Val Thomas' and Linda Stalzer's positions). One candidate he is recommending is Joe Quintana.

## **PROJECT UPDATES**

### **South Wallingford Plan**

Vice Chair Denise Lathrop reported that four Commissioners (including her) are reviewing the South Wallingford Plan Amendment and will prepare a comment letter for full Commission review at the next meeting. Marty Curry is participating in the interdepartmental team meetings, learning how City departments are responding to the plan's recommendations. While the City Council will have a briefing on the plan soon, it will not be acted on until next fall after DCLU has been able to carry out analyses of various proposed land use changes.

### **Housing Choices**

Vice Chair Denise Lathrop reported that she, Val Thomas, Marty and Jory Phillips (DCLU Staff) met with Councilmember Nicastro early this week to brief her on the proposed public process for the Housing Choices package (cottage housing and detached ADU's). Councilmember Nicastro expressed support of the approach of several focus groups followed by a public open house. She suggested that the Commission brief the full Council at a business meeting soon. She also suggested a joint Council/Commission public hearing/forum be held when this package comes to Council. Marty Curry noted that the focus groups are planned for late February and will provide valuable feedback and advice from a range of citizens and housing developers.

### **2003 Work Plan**

Vice Chair Lathrop noted that this is on the agenda today and will be the primary focus of the January 23<sup>rd</sup> meeting. The two briefings at today's meeting represent potential major commitments of the Planning Commission, therefore Commissioners should be considering carefully priorities for themselves and the full Commission.

### **2003 Commission Retreat**

Marty Curry asked for input from Commissioners on whether to have a full day (Saturday) or two half day (5 – 9 pm) sessions for their retreat. She noted the Chair's and her desire to schedule the retreat for late February/early March. Commissioners voiced a strong preference for two half day sessions and Marty agreed to send out some potential dates for their response.

## **PRESENTATIONS**

### **BRIEFING/UPDATE: Monorail/Seattle Popular Monorail Authority (SPMA)**

Vice-Chair Denise Lathrop welcomed Ethan Melone, the City's Monorail Program Manager. Ethan began by explaining that Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) is responsible for citywide coordination of the monorail project and he is the program manager. He noted the importance of SPMA hiring a lead architect at the outset of the

project, assuring that design and engineering will be of equal importance in the development of the project. VIA Suzuki has been hired by SPMA and brings experience of designing Vancouver's Skytrain. They will coordinate the architects doing station design. This firm brings a strong vision to alignment planning as well as station design. They are developing design guidelines for the guideway which will help ensure that engineering choices alone won't drive alignment planning.

In response to Commissioner Darryl Smith's question about community involvement, Ethan Melone stated that a consultant, Norton Arnold has been hired to do the community EIS workshops. The SPMA will also be hiring neighborhood liaisons for each of the segments of the line.

Ethan Melone then briefly described the City structure, noting that SMPA will provide dedicated resources for City staffing. As the program manager, Ethan's task is to integrate policy and planning functions and promote a collaborative approach in working with the SPMA. He is beginning with the City Intent Resolution which addressed many issues including the \$20 million bridge loan. He has set up an interdepartmental team that will be guided by the goals distilled from the Intent Resolution and the interlocal agreement that is currently being developed.

Design Review is an important element of the process and staff will be allocated for this work. This work will include both the Design and Planning Commissions. DON's sector managers and neighborhood service center coordinators will take the lead in community involvement, advising on the SPMA's process and providing input to the City from the community. The City will primarily work within the SPMA's community involvement process.

Ethan Melone noted that some neighborhoods are already taking positions, using the Ballard District Council's recent position on parking as an example. Commissioner Mimi Sheridan asked who will make decisions on such policy issues. Melone noted that some issues will be determined through the EIS process, some through the planning and design process. He stressed the City's approach of collaboration and negotiation and also stated that he sees a lot of the issues being part of the SPMA process. Ethan also noted that Cynthia Robinson (SDOT) and Lesley Bain (consultant) are currently helping him get the City's structure and processes underway, including identifying planning and design issues.

Marty Curry reported that the Executive has recognized the need for planning around stations. This will be much more limited than what was done in light rail planning, but will address gaps in neighborhood plans regarding monorail stations and service and opportunities to achieve neighborhood and City goals. Ethan noted that the City will likely begin with a planning/urban design assessment to identify the scope of such an effort and wants to be careful to create realistic expectations of this work. A lot of the work will inform decisions rather than producing a plan.

Commissioner Jeanne Krikawa stated that she was concerned about parking and asked if it would be a neighborhood decision whether to provide parking around stations. A brief discussion ensued regarding how the City makes such policy decisions and what its current policies are regarding park and ride and dedicated parking.

Commissioner Steve Sheehy asked if there is going to be an accommodation of the monorail in neighborhood plans. Do neighborhood plans need to be amended to do so? He noted that he doesn't see neighborhood planning process fitting within the timeline of the monorail's planning timeframe. Ethan responded that the challenge will be to identify key points in the monorail process where other planning issues or decisions need to be incorporated.

Vice Chair Denise Lathrop stated that it is critical that there be a strong focus on multi-modal integration, particularly at King Street Station. Ethan responded that the City shares that view and has also identified Westlake station as another place where multi-modal connections should be made.

Commissioners concluded with a discussion about their next steps. The Monorail ad hoc committee and any other Commissioners who are interested will work with staff to draft comments on the EIS Scoping document (deadline is February 7, 2003). The Commission will also review and comment on the Draft EIS when it is published and will participate in station area planning. Commissioners will also be encouraged to attend the SPMA sponsored workshops later this month. Staff will work to make sure that the Commission has a representative at each of these meetings.

Commissioner Mimi Sheridan expressed concern that major alignment decisions will be made in February and urged that the Planning Commission weigh in on alignments soon. Marty Curry voiced her hope to have a team of Commissioners to work on this project shortly. A first step will be working with DCLU to determine roles and to get the Commissioner information needed for their roles.

Vice Chair Lathrop thanked Ethan Melone for his informative briefing and expressed the Commission's commitment to work closely with the City and SPMA in the coming months on this important transportation project.

#### **BRIEFING/DISCUSSION: WATERFRONT PLANNING**

Vice Chair Denise Lathrop welcomed John Rahaim, Director, and Dennis Meier, Senior Urban Designer, CityDesign.

John Rahaim opened the briefing, stating that the goal of this process is to make timely decisions regarding the future of the waterfront that will influence the design of the Alaskan Way Viaduct. He reported that the Viaduct project intends to "freeze" the

design by September, 2003. The City's goal is to be far enough along in waterfront planning to have input to the DEIS and the design freeze.

Dennis Meier described the overall waterfront planning process, noting that it is in the formative stage. The scope of this project covers a larger area than the Alaskan Way Viaduct project, extending south to Terminal 46 and north to Myrtle Edwards Park and the Sculpture Park. It also includes the upland areas to ensure integration between them and the waterfront. Meier added that the City's intent is to make sure that the Viaduct project options don't foreclose future options for the waterfront. This project will offer guidance on surface area improvements and general sketches for waterfront development which can be tested against the Viaduct alternatives.

The first phase (2003) of the waterfront planning process will keep pace with the Viaduct effort, thus must reach some general conclusions about the future of the waterfront in time to be incorporated into the Viaduct DEIS. This first phase calls for expansive public involvement at the beginning of the process, seeking input from a broad variety of stakeholders. Some technical analysis will also be carried out in the first phase.

Dennis Meier stated that a Waterfront Advisory Group is planned, comprised of people who are fairly knowledgeable about the waterfront. They want to rely on the Planning Commission and Design Commission to structure the public involvement. Their hope is to develop "ground rules" or principles and assumptions for the April public forum. The initial stage is to get the public involvement process underway and get input to the Viaduct project at key points in their process.

The second stage is to carry out an environmental analysis of alternatives, a step that depends upon funding. This step will provide the opportunity to look at Comprehensive Plan and Shoreline Policy issues as they relate to the future of the waterfront. During this phase the City will engage the public in discussions and seek agreement on the desired function and character of the waterfront. The third stage of the process will focus on developing an urban design plan for the waterfront, possibly through a design competition.

Commissioner Jeanne Krikawa asked what happened to an earlier Option 2 regarding the overall planning process. John Rahaim responded that the City has decided that Option 1, which calls for front-loading public involvement, is a preferable approach.

Commissioner Mimi Sheridan noted that one of the challenges is to clarify how this process does or doesn't relate to the Viaduct project, as it should influence but not drive it. John Rahaim agreed and noted that it is important to identify the "givens" early in the process. Mimi Sheridan asked who will make decisions regarding givens, to which Dennis Meier responded that the early forums will be one source of guidance on developing a framework for the project.

Commissioner Paul Tomita asked if the goal is to come up with something elastic enough to apply to all Viaduct alternatives. He stated his hope that the plan will give some direction in mitigating or solving traffic associated with the Viaduct's surface alternative. Dennis Meier responded that the hope is that the waterfront plan will support the Viaduct preferred alternatives. John Rahaim added that this more specific planning could also be helpful in the EIS process.

John Rahaim and Dennis Meier noted that periodically the City has considered the fundamental issues about the function of the waterfront. In the most recent effort in the 1980s the City reconfirmed the waterfront's maritime function. This waterfront planning process will consider functions as well as the relationship between the waterfront and the upland areas and with Pioneer Square and Belltown. Marty Curry added that this early phase will include consideration of planning issues including economic functions and vitality, open space needs, relationships to downtown neighborhoods, and public safety. Dennis Meier stated that earlier romantic notions of the waterfront are no longer valid. There are lots of new questions regarding the mix of uses including housing and mixed use developments.

Commissioner Paul Tomita suggested expanding the planning area further into downtown, particularly given these broader considerations. John Rahaim acknowledged that this might be advisable since the Viaduct surface alternative would affect the street grid and the pedestrian environment further into downtown. He also noted that the City is putting \$5 million and WSDOT is seeking \$12 – 15 million to fund the Viaduct EIS.

Commissioner Mimi Sheridan asked how this effort relates to the Shoreline Policies and the Public Trust Doctrine. Dennis Meier stated that these will be part of the initial assessment of the policy framework.

Commissioner Jeanne Krikawa asked about Terminal 46. Dennis Meier stated that the Mayor's Office is interested in being more proactive on what the City would like to see as the Port considers its future options. John Rahaim noted his belief that the Port put T46 on the table for discussion because the Viaduct project could affect it significantly. Dennis Meier said that any major change in use of T46 would require zoning changes and a Comp Plan change in the boundary of the industrial area.

#### Commission Role in Waterfront Planning

Vice Chair Denise Lathrop focused the discussion on the role of the Planning Commission in the waterfront planning process. The following roles were put forward by staff and Commissioners:

- Ensure coordination with the Viaduct project, offering the Commission's experience with this effort;
- Collaborate with the Design Commission on the public process;
- Participate on the Waterfront Advisory Group;

- Co-sponsor public forums in April and June and a waterfront conference in September; and
- Provide a planning advisory role throughout the process.

John Rahaim closed the discussion with an acknowledgement that broader stakeholders need to be involved, including ferry riders and regional citizens and organizations that view the waterfront as a valuable part of Seattle and the region. He noted that CityDesign has money to fund a full-time staff person and will look at other funding sources for the planning process. He also noted that the Mayor's office has put together a brochure on the waterfront plan.

Vice Chair Denise Lathrop asked for volunteers to work with staff on this project in coming months. Angela Brooks, Jeanne Krikawa, and Paul Tomita volunteered to participate. Marty Curry noted that those Commissioners who have been participating on the Viaduct project will also be asked to engage in this process.

Vice Chair Denise Lathrop thanked John Rahaim and Dennis Meier for coming and for a good discussion.

### **2003 WORK PLAN PRIORITIES**

Marty Curry reminded Commissioners that the 2003 Work Plan will be the primary focus of the January 23<sup>rd</sup> Commission meeting. She asked that each Commissioner review the initial list of projects and activities and come prepared to discuss how these fit the Commission's criteria and where each person is willing to put their time and energy. The goal is to create a work plan that reflects Commission and City priorities and matches them with staff and Commission resources.

**ADJOURN:** Vice Chair Denise Lathrop adjourned the meeting at 5:35 p.m.